

Victory Village--Improvement In The Future?

The Daily Tar Heel

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But, Quick Repair Service Today

Today, residents report that the Victory Village management gives "excellent" and quick repair service for all matters concerning the buildings themselves.

But, one of the most unalluring features is the landscape around the old housing.

Bare, eroded gullies run through backyards. Tiny gravel-like stones cover everything except roads and a few patches of high, weed-ridden, uncut grass; and large boulders sit among garbage cans and clotheslines.

Complaints about the grounds rather than the buildings are far more numerous.

Most of the mothers interviewed would like to see places for their children to play—"some place for swings, slides, sidewalks."

Husbands mentioned that, although the management provided lawnmowers for them, these usually proved to be hopelessly inadequate because of rust or lack of parts.

Rain Brings Muddy Rivers Across Lawns

Residents mentioned the lack of gutters for the roads and regretted that any rain usually brought muddy rivers down across the houses and lawns.

Many of the barracks lie below the level of the roads and are always covered with a muddy brown discoloration from their foundations to the level of their porches.

Perhaps the appealing feature of these barracks to most of their present residents is the rent—\$15 to \$35 per month.

Comments such as "I can't gripe for \$27 a month," or "The only reason we came back to school was this low rent," were heard from most occupants interviewed by the *Daily Tar Heel*.

Wayne King

After The Village ...?

Victory Village came into being in 1947. Since that time it has been the residence of thousands of students and their wives.

It has weathered thirteen years of storms, snows and hails, not to mention some winds of hurricane velocity.

The squat, ugly, architect's nightmares have been nailed up, rewired, painted, repainted, moved, shuffled, reset on their foundations, underpinned and shored up.

They have been renovated, renewed and rejuvenated countless times.

All this has been done in thirteen years to wood and fiber-board structures that were designed to last for a maximum of eight years.

Some of the units have a history of longer than the thirteen years mentioned.

World War II was over in 1945, fifteen years ago. Some of the units saw service prior to the end of that war.

In short, these units are standing today, long after they should have been replaced. Most of the European countries which were ravaged by WW II have been rebuilt. Entire cities have been reconstructed, complete!

But just as France has some remnants of the Maginot Line, and Japan has Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Carolina still has Victory Village.

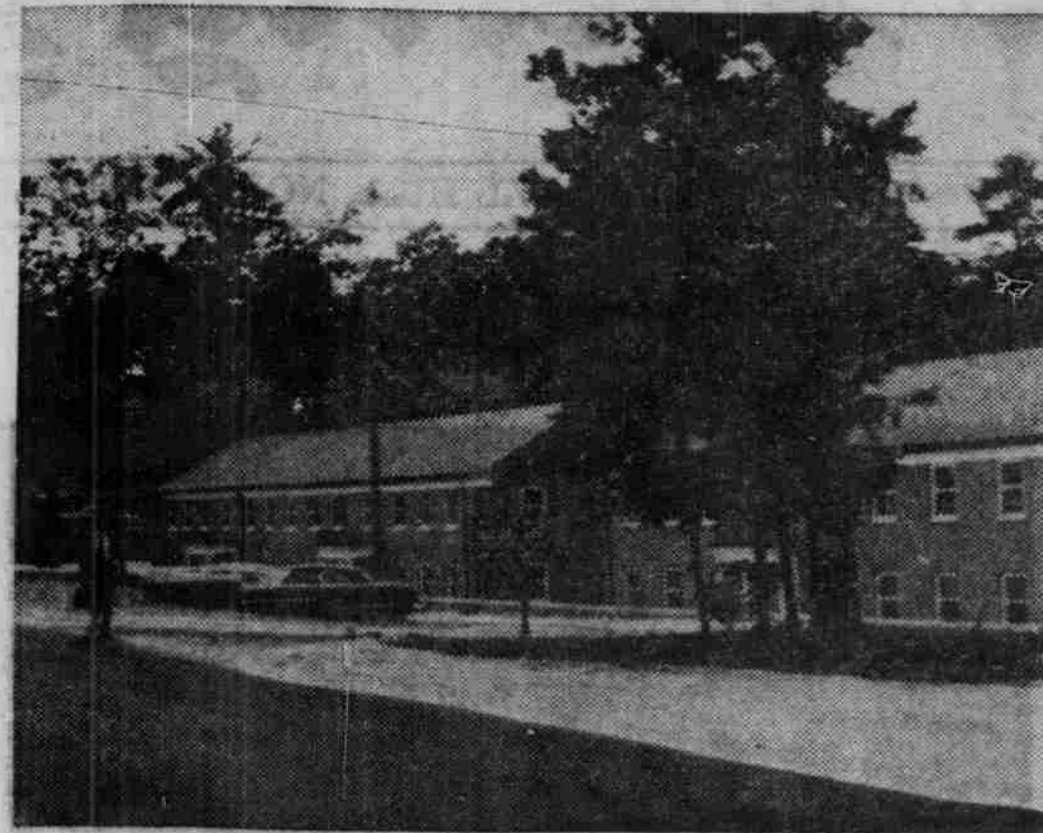
Desparately Outmoded

The mass of army barracks and "temporary" government housing which comprise the older section of the village are desparately outmoded.

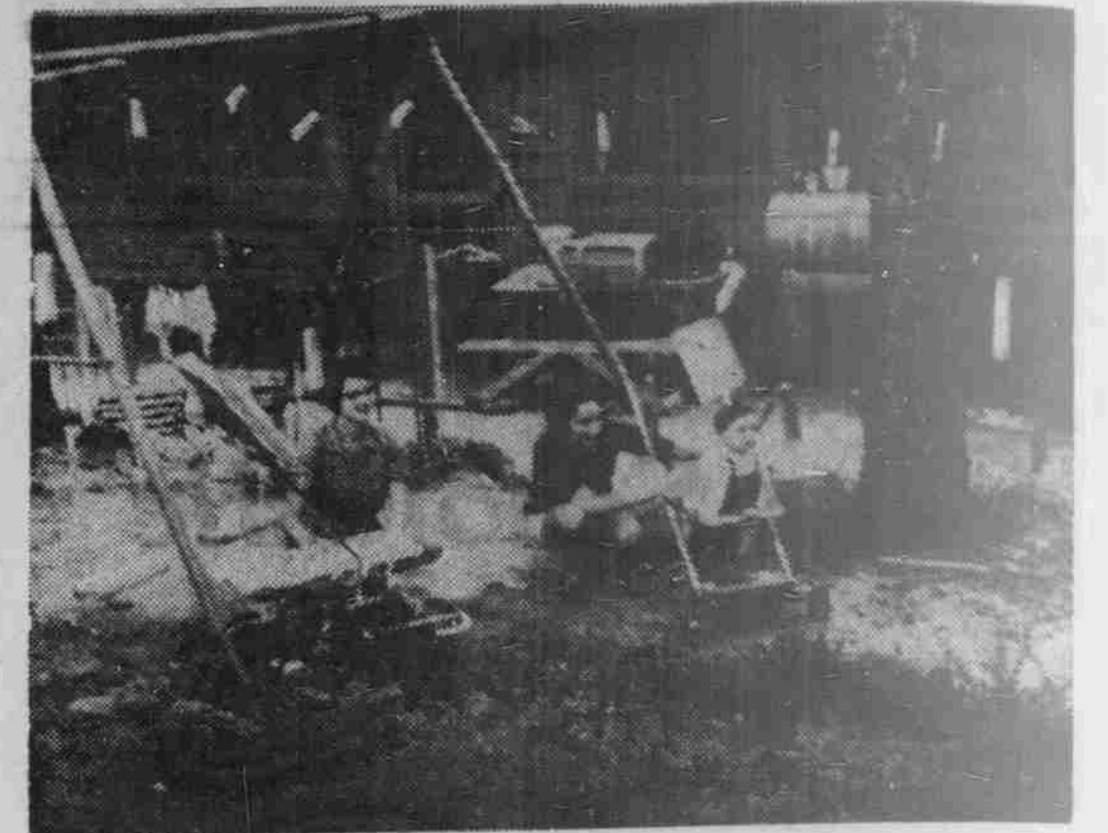
The roads and landscaping (both terms are used loosely) that surround the living units are eyesores on what is otherwise a beautiful campus.

Some of the wooden frame structures could easily fall prey to a ravaging fire that only prompt action could prevent from becoming a holocaust.

But, admittedly, this is only one side of the picture. On the other side is the low-budget married couple who



THE NEW HOUSING in Victory Village is made up of 208 units of modern, fireproof brick.



THE OLD UNITS were designed as temporary living units. That was in 1947.

need adequate housing at a price he and his family can afford.

Rental costs in the old section of the Village are more than reasonable, so reasonable in fact, that many married students are able to continue at Carolina only because of the low housing costs he can maintain by living in one of the units.

The housing itself is obviously outmoded, but it can, and is, being lived in with some degree of comfort.

Surveillance Necessary

Constant surveillance on the part of maintenance men keep the water out and the heat in. Repainting serves to keep the appearance of the houses from being downright revolting.

The student's own ingenuity and hard work can make the fiber board walls presentable and sometimes even attractive with pictures and other decorative devices.

Money taken from an already pinched budget will buy swings and slides for the children if the family wants to make the sacrifice.

Besides, if anyone desires, he could probably get a place to live elsewhere. Other housing does exist in Chapel Hill. If you can afford it.

The 208 new units just built last year are the best bet for a Carolina student. They are the ultimate in modern brick housing for college students. But they cost at least twice as much per month as the old housing. And they cannot accommodate everyone who needs living space without the help of the old structures.

Obviously this poses a problem for the prospective seeker of an apartment.

With a wife and children, many cannot afford to pay the costs of an education and provide housing for his family as well. Herein the Village provides a service that cannot be over-estimated.

Unfortunately, the units cannot stand forever, although it would appear that some in our administration feel they will outlast the Rock of Gibraltar.

After the older houses are torn down, what then? We must assume that they will eventually fall prey to the bulldozers, and go to their long-overdue end.

Then Carolina will be faced with a housing problem of immense proportions—unless some action is taken soon towards supplying some substitute for the housing which must ultimately go.

At present, no concrete plans have been made toward replacement of those units which now comprise a large portion of our married-student housing.

When They Are Gone

When they are gone (and we hope that they will go soon), more housing will have to be constructed to replace them. Will the administration erect more of the modern brick structures that now stand adjacent to the old apartments? And if they do, what about the rental rates? Will they remain the same or will they be reduced to a level commensurate with what the families can afford to pay?

If the rates are not reduced, much of the purpose of

the improvements will be lost, purely and simply because not much benefit can be derived from improvements that few can afford.

The importance of this factor cannot be over-emphasized. Excessive costs will drive many a capable student away from Carolina.

The answer, then, lies in an immediate project to continue construction at a steady pace, while at the same time the worst of the housing is being torn down. Then, as the older units become unusable, they can be removed to make room for the new apartments. Rental costs should then be lowered by means of longer mortgages, which, though they are more expensive in the long run seem to provide the only feasible method of keeping rents within a reasonable range, one which can be met from a limited budget.

Like The One-Horse Shay

The issue of greatest importance is to do something, and start doing it now, before the Village begins to fall apart like the Wonderful One Horse Shay—all at once and too late to do anything about it.

The housing already constructed is a step in the right direction. But if it becomes an excuse for resting on our laurels, then it can only be construed as a halting half-step. It should be followed by successive strides toward the same goal.

Removing only half of Victory Village is much like cutting away half a cancer and trying to convert the remaining half into healthy tissue.

Of course, a program of this nature cannot be accomplished in a short time. It will take time and a great deal of it. It will also take a lot of money.

And until this money is scraped together, plans laid and executed, the old barracks and temporary houses will still stand.

Need Attention Now

Most of these need attention now. They cannot wait until some other moves are made. Cracked underpinnings and fallen fences are serious offenders insofar as they detract to a great measure from the livability of the houses themselves.

Neither do boulders in backyards or garbage cans too close to houses. These things won't get a residence condemned as unsafe. Neither will lack of play areas for children or roads that are in need of repair.

But they will make things mighty uncomfortable. The majority of the eyesores could be remedied with a minimum capital outlay. Of course, it may seem silly to put money into improvement of buildings and grounds that should, in the future, be torn down. The point here, however, is that the tearing down and rebuilding process will take some time, even if the administration has the foresight to start immediately.

Meanwhile these improvements should be made. Apparently we will have to live with these World War II monuments for a while yet.

At present we should be planning to get rid of them—fatten them up for the slaughter by making them at least presentable now.

Bill Hobbs

The Spoils Of War

Victory Village's two housing sections present a striking contrast of old and new.

In the one case, the decadent, thin-walled, converted army barracks—existing on their present site for over 13 years and at various army camps around the country even longer—stand packed together along poorly paved roads.

However, the new section includes 208 fireproof brick units constructed only last year.

And these modern homes soon will be surrounded by an equally new and attractive landscape, intended to help provide residents with a pleasant living environment inside and out.

Housing Problem In 1947

World War II's termination found Carolina and other universities and colleges across the country with a severe housing problem.

G.I. students returning to school with wives had no place to live.

Fortunately, the United States happened to have a great deal of excess, temporary housing on her hands.

And this is what the U.S. made available to schools on the condition that they construct the road, sewage, plumbing and electrical systems necessary to make the units liveable.

Carolina did this; the Army gave her an assorted collection of unwanted barracks, and in 1947 Victory Village came into being.

"Unfit" For Occupancy 5 Years Ago

The housing units were installed as an emergency measure and were expected to be fit for occupancy no longer than eight years.

Thirteen have passed.

Not all of the housing in the old section of the Village had seen service in 1947.

The "UK" buildings are single residences, so named because they were new, prefabricated, temporary buildings, intended for use in Great Britain but shunted to UNC when the war ended their trip to England.

Each cream-colored home has two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen and a single heating unit.

The long, one-story multiple units with one central heating unit for every two buildings were transported here from the army camp at Laurinburg.

Each contains three apartments on concrete foundations with from one to three bedrooms.

Wilmington's base provided the two-story houses which bear its name—each with a single heating unit.

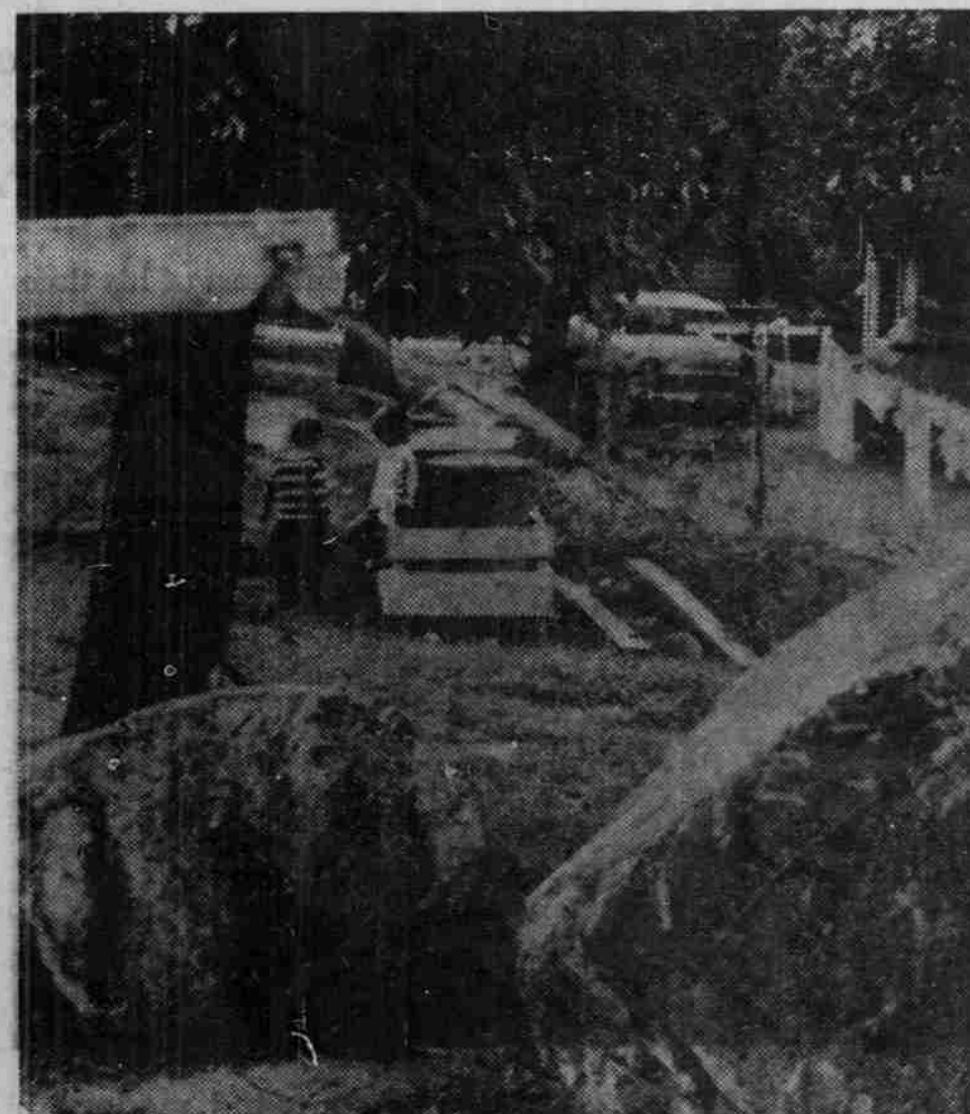
What's Good For Today May Be Lacking Tomorrow



A FALLEN, BROKEN CHICKEN-WIRE fence represents the many eyesores that are to be found in the village.



PLAY AREAS FOR CHILDREN are a much needed addition to the construction that is to provide married students with adequate living facilities.



HUGE BOULDERS left in back-yards are mute testimony to the hurry with which the housing was erected in 1947.



GULLIES AND DITCHES which spew rivers of mud into yards and onto walls are to be found throughout the development.